THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) and (b) A Centrally sponsored scheme for integrated development of cashew is being implemented during 1998-99, with an outlay of Rs. 20.00 crores, under which a total assistance @ Rs. 9,100/- per hectare is provided for cutting down old, senile and uneconomical cashew trees and replanting with clones of high yielding varieties. Rs. 2100/- per hectare is provided in three instalments to meet the loss caused by cutting down the trees and Rs. 7,000/- per hectare for replanting/rejuvenation over a period of 5 years for productivity improvement. Under the scheme, an area of 43948 hectare has been replanted during the period 1994-95 to 1997-98 in various States.

Increased Production in Coarse Cereal Cultivation

1729. SHRI YERRA NARAYANASWAMY: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to news-item in the Economic Times dated February 22, 1999 captioned "Call to up area under coarse cereal cultivation"

(b) whether it is a fact that there would be vast benefits to the soil if rotation of crops is practised more vigorously;

(c) if so, whether farmers would get any price incentives to switch to coarse grains and fodder crops;

(d) if not, how does Government propose to make it worthwhile for farmers to grow fodder crops and coarse grains;

(e) whether any suggestions have been sought from State Governments; and

(f) reaction of different States to more emphasis on coarse grains and fodder?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) and (d) The Government of India announces each season the Minimum Support Price for major agricultural commodities including coarse grains. The Minimum Support Price fixed by the Government covers not only cost of production but also a reasonable margin of profit as an incentive to improve the production and productivity. Fodder crops are not covered under Minimum Support Price, however, growing of fodder crops is found to be remunerative to the farmers rearing animals for marketing animal produce.

The Government of India is already implementing Centrally Sponsored Schemes for increasing production and productivity of coarse grains and fodder crops. Under the schemes assistance is provided for the transfer of technology through demonstrations and farmers trainings as well as supply of critical inputs.

(e) and (f) The various schemes are formulated in consultations with State Governments.

Cultivation of Hybrid Rice

1730. SHRI ANANTA SETHI: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have a proposal to diversify the cultivation of hybrid rice in the country;

(b) whether the United National Development Programmes (UNDP) grants are likely to be obtained for growing hybrid rice;

(c) if so, the States selected for growing such hybrid rice during Ninth Plan;

(d) the amount proposed to be spent under the programme in every State; and

(e) the specific proposal mooted by Government to increase rice production in Ninth Plan?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir, UNDP under its "Programme for Food Security" is providing